



# City of Sacramento

## **A Forum to Discuss Level of Service Policies**

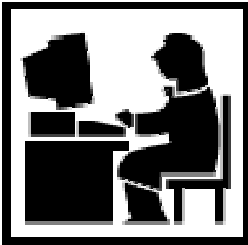
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State of California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research  
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# What is Level of Service Used for Anyway?



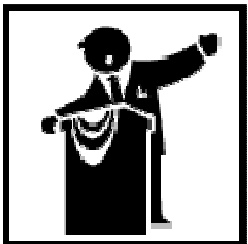
Development application is submitted that proposes buildings or uses that will generate trips



If staff estimates that pedestrian, bicycle, transit or auto travel could be impacted by the proposed use then a traffic study is performed



The traffic study identifies **“significant”** impacts on arterial and collector streets based upon **established thresholds** and recommends projects (mitigation measures) to minimize these impacts



City Council makes findings on the “significant” impacts adopting mitigation measures determined to be feasible and overriding significant impacts deemed to be outweighed by the benefits of the project.

## **So What Was Wrong With the Process?**

- Current de facto LOS C threshold of significance was based on broad policy language in the 1998 General Plan
- Smart Growth Principles were adopted by Council in 2001.
- LOS C threshold was at odds with the new Smart Growth Principles

## **Policy Conflict within the 1988 General Plan**

“Increase the use of the pedestrian mode as a mode of choice for all areas of the City.”

“Work towards the more efficient use of the City’s existing street system.”

“Develop a balanced transportation system which will encourage the use of public transit, multiple occupancy of the private automobile, and other forms of transportation.”

“Develop bicycling as a major transportation and recreational mode.”

**AND**

“Maintain an overall Level of Service C”

## **The Path Away from LOS C**

- The General Plan 2030 Update process begun in 2004 sought to guide land uses down an aggressive smart growth path
- In 2005 City Council committed to follow the Preferred Blueprint Scenario approved by the SACOG Board in 2004.
- Draft recommendations were shared with local environmental advocates, Planning Commissioners, Development Oversight Commissioners, and City Council
- In 2007 Council approved staff's LOS recommendations for the General Plan 2030 Update.
- The General Plan 2030 environmental analysis had to be completed with the LOS C standard because changing the threshold would have required separate analysis.
- Neighborhood Level of Service or "Quality of Life" began to become an issue as residents began to understand the consequences of growing up versus out
- Concerns began to arise related to the City's ability to maintain acceptable emergency response times with higher acceptable levels of congestion.

## **Recommendations Adopted by Council**

1. Modify the Citywide significance threshold from LOS C to LOS D.
2. Modify the significance threshold for projects on parcels within ¼ mile of light rail stations from LOS C to LOS E.
3. Modify the significance threshold for projects in the Central Business District from LOS C to LOS E.
4. Develop a defensible method of measuring neighborhood level traffic impacts in order to devise appropriate mitigations.
5. Work with SACOG to develop and adopt regional mitigation strategies that address development impacts to State and regional facilities in a fair and equitable manner.

## **Draft General Plan 2030 Direction**

1. Modify the Citywide significance threshold from LOS C to LOS D.
2. Modify the significance threshold for projects with “Urban” designations from LOS C to LOS E.
3. Exempt projects in the Central City Community Plan Area from LOS threshold significance analysis.
4. Follow through with an implementation measure to develop an acceptable method of measuring neighborhood impacts of development induced traffic in order to devise appropriate mitigations.

## **Remaining Issues**

1. Modification of a nationally recognized standard procedure
2. Addressing emergency response concerns related to the increased level of congestion made acceptable by our policy changes.